

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANTO 03862 142202Z
ACTION ARA-14

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5323
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
AMEMBASSY LISBON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 3862

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, DR
SUBJECT: BALAGUER CONCEDES

1. PRESIDENT BALAGUER LAST NIGHT (JULY 13) IMPLICITLY
ACKNOWLEDGED TO THE NATION HIS DEFEAT IN THE MAY 16
ELECTION. HE INDICATED HE WILL LEAD A CONSTRUCTIVE
OPPOSITION TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ANTONIO GUZMAN, WHICH IS
SCHEDULED TO TAKE POWER AUGUST 16.

2. BALAGUER'S TV APPEARANCE, HIS FIRST PUBLIC STATEMENT ON
THE ELECTORAL CRISIS SINCE MAY 18 WHEN HE SAID HE WOULD ACCEPT
THE RULING OF THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL BOARD AS FINAL AND BINDING,
WAS A REMARKABLE PERFORMANCE. SPEAKING WITH PASSION, THE
PRESIDENT, WITHOUT EXPLICITLY ADMITTING DEFEAT OR MENTIONING
GUZMAN BY NAME, SAID IN EFFECT THAT THE COUNTRY HAD TO ACCEPT
THE JCE'S RULING--THAT IS, THE ELECTION OF GUZMAN ALONG WITH
THE BOARD'S AWARD TO BALAGUER'S REFORMISTA PARTY OF
CONTROL OF THE NEXT SENATE BY A 16-11 MARGIN.

3. THIS IS THE SAME DEMAND ISSUED EARLIER IN THE WEEK
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SANTO 03862 142202Z

BY THE REFORMISTA-CONTROLLED CONGRESS AND BY THE ARMED FORCES
WHICH, IN THEIR RESPECTIVE RESOLUTION AND COMMUNIQUE, WARNED
THE NATION TO FORGET THE UNDISPUTED FACT THAT THE REFORMISTA
PARTY (PR) "WON" THE SENATE WITH NON-EXISTENT VOTES AND ACCEPT
THE JCE'S RULING.

4. THAT RULING, GENERALLY DENOUNCED AS UNCONSTITUTIONAL AND

ABSURD--EVEN BY THE REFORMISTA LAWYER WHO HANDLED THE PARTY'S EIGHT-WEEK CHALLENGE OF THE VOTE RESULTS--IS WHAT THE COUNTRY NEEDS, EVEN THOUGH IN ITS JURIDICAL ASPECTS IT IS "MONSTROUS," BALAGUER SAID. WITH ALL ITS "DEFECTS," HE CONTINUED, IT WILL IF ACCEPTED, SAVE CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT IN THIS COUNTRY AND WILL OPEN THE DOOR TO WIDER COGLABORATION BETWEEN THE TWO MAJOR POLITICAL FORCES, HIS PR AND THE VICTORIOUS PARTIDO REVOLUCIONARIO DOMINICANO.

5. THAT WAS THE CONSTRUCTIVE PART OF THE SPEECH THE COUNTRY THIS MORNING FOCUSED ON WITH EVIDENT DETERMINATION TO REASSURE ITSELF THAT INDEED THE LONG CRISIS IS OVER AND A HISTORIC STEP TOWARD GENUINE DEMOCRACY CAN NOW BE TAKEN. ALL THREE MORNING PAPERS CARRIED EDITORIALS HAILING HIS PROMISE TO COOPERATE WITH THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION BUT ALID OVER THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF THE SPEECH.

6. BALAGUER BEGAN HIS ADDRESS BY SALUTING THE JCE FOR ITS CIVIC COURAGE AND WENT ON TO SAY HE WOULD NOT RESURRECT ALL THE ARGUMENTS OF HIS PARTY THAT THERE WAS MASSIVE PRD-ENGINEERED FRAUD IN THE MAY 16 ELECTION. HE THERE UPON RECALLED THOSE ARGUMENTS AND CHARTED THAT THE "HUMAN RIGHTS" OF UP TO 500,000 OF HIS FOLLOWERS HAD BEEN GROSSLY VIOLATED BY THE ALLEGED FRAUDULENT DENIAL OF THEIR RIGHT TO VOTE.

7. THE PRESIDENT MADE GLANCING REFERENCE TO THE NEAR-COUP
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SANTO 03862 142202Z

BY THE ARMED FORCES EARLY ON MAY 17, INDICATING HE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT THE MOVE. HE COMMENTED BITTERLY ON THE ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS, FOREIGN INTERVENTION AND SPECIFICALLY PORTUGUESE PRIME MINISTER MARIO SOARES AND THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL. AFTER REFERRING TO PAST US INTERVENTION, BALAGUER SAID SOARES WAS BEING USED BY THE US TO "CORRECT" ITS PROBLEMS IN ANGOLA AND ADDED HIS HOPE THAT IN PAYMENT SOARES IS NOT ALLOWED TO CHOOSE THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AS A GUINEA PIG FOR AN EXPERIMENT BY THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL.

8. BALAGUER'S ANGRY SPEECH, CONCIDENTALLY, FOLLOWED BY LESS THAN AN HOUR A TELEVISED ADDRESS BY ANTONIO GUZMAN, WHO THE DAY BEFORE HAD RECEIVED HIS OFFICIAL CERTIFICATE OF ELECTION FROM THE JCE. GUZMAN'S MESSAGE, DELIVERED IN HIS CAPACITY AS PRESIDENT-ELECT, WAS A MEASURED ONE OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION--ALTHOUGH HE COULD NOT RESIST AT THE OUTSET A BLAST AT THE JCE FOR ITS "MONSTROUS AND UNCONSTITUTIONAL" DECISION IN RESPECT OF THE SENATE. WHILE HIS PARTY APPEALS IT TO THE SUPREME COURT, GUZMAN CALLED ON THE DOMINICAN PEOPLE TO PUT ALL THEIR DIFFERENCES BEHIND THEM AND TO WORK FOR THE GOOD OF THE NATION.

9. COMMENT: THE CONTRAST IN THESE TWO IMPORTANT

SPEECHES WAS STRIKING. ONE WAS A STATESMANLIKE APPEAL TO THE DOMINICAN PEOPLE TO HELP AN INCOMING PRESIDENT CARRY THE COUNTRY ALONG THE ROAD TO REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT AND DEAL WITH SERIOUS PROBLEMS AFFECTING PROSPERITY AND PEACE. IN THE OTHER, A DEFEATED PRESIDENT STRUCK OUT AT EVERYTHING HE CONNECTED WITH HIS DEPARTURE FROM POWER. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT BALAGUER ONCE MORE ASSURED PUBLICLY THAT THE PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION WOULD PROCEED. ON THE SENATE SIDE, THE PROMISE OF PR COLLABORATION WITH THE PRD (AFTER THE "MONSTRUOUS" JCE DECISION), IS NICE; BUT NEITHER HIS OFFER NOR THE JCE DECISION IS IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS AS RELEVANT AS THE HOSE-TRADING THAT WILL NO DOUBT ESTABLISH THE EVENTUAL POLITICAL COMPLEXION OF THAT BODY. CONTINUED POLITICAL SKULLDUGGERY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 SANTO 03862 142202Z

IS PERHAPS INEVITABLE BUT, ON BALANCE, THE SANFFROID AND MATURITY ONCE MORE DISPLAYED BY GUZMAN AUGUR WELL FOR THE NEW GOVERNMENT AND THE TWO PERFORMANCES TOGETHER APPEAR TO HAVE TAKEN THE DR ONE MORE WOBBLY STEP DOWN THE TRANSITION ROAD.
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